

THE GOLDEN STATE AND STATE EMBLEMS

California – The name California is believed to have come from a 16th Century Spanish novel about a mythical land inhabited by Amazons and ruled by the beautiful black queen Calafia. The first official mention of California was a July 2, 1542, entry in the diary of Juan Cabrillo as his ship lay at anchor off the coast of Baja California. The term was later applied to Alta California, which became the present State of California, on September 9, 1850.

The Great Seal – The design for the Great Seal was adopted at the Constitutional Convention of 1848. Under thirty-one stars, Minerva, Roman goddess of arts, sciences, and wisdom in war and peace, keeps watch over a tableau depicting industry, commerce, agriculture, mining, and the grandeur of nature. Like the political birth of California, Minerva was born full grown from the brain of Jupiter, father of the gods and guardian of law and order. The grizzly bear at her feet, independent and formidable, symbolizes California.

State Animal – The California Grizzly Bear, depicted on the Great Seal and the State Flag, became the official State Animal in 1953. Now extinct, the California Grizzly Bear was a particularly large, fierce and powerful animal that thrived in the great valleys and low mountains of the state. The last living specimen was shot in Tulare County in 1922. A bear frequently symbolizes California in political cartoons.

State Bird – The California Quail, also known as the valley quail, became the official State Bird in 1931. Plump, gray-colored and smaller than a pigeon, the California quail has a downward-curving black plume on top of its head and a black bib with a white stripe under its beak. They are known for their hardiness and adaptability.

State Colors – The official colors of the state are blue and gold—Yale blue and golden yellow. These are also the colors of the University of California.

State Dance – West Coast Swing Dancing is the State Dance. It originated in California and is danced in competition nationally and internationally. The Square Dance is the official State Folk Dance.

State Fife and Drum Band – The California Consolidated Drum Band was designated as the official State Fife and Drum Corps in 1997.

State Fish – The California Golden Trout is native to no other state and became the official State Fish in 1947. Closely related to the rainbow trout, it was originally found only in the icy streams of the Kern Plateau in the southern Sierra Nevada, south of Mount Whitney.

State Flag – The Bear Flag was raised on June 14, 1846, by American settlers in Sonoma during an uprising against the Mexican government. Although the so-called “California Republic” was short lived, its flag became a romantic symbol of independence and was adopted as the State Flag by the Legislature in 1911.

State Flower – The Golden Poppy, which can be found blooming somewhere in California during every part of the year, became the State Flower in 1903. April 6 is designated *California Poppy Day*. California Indians valued the poppy as a food source and for the oil extracted from the plant. Also known as the flame flower, the poppy grows wild throughout California.

State Fossil – The Saber-Toothed Cat, adopted as State Fossil by the Legislature in 1973, was a powerful, tiger-sized carnivore with 8-inch fangs. Common in California 40 million years ago, it hunted thick-skinned animals such as mastodons.

State Gemstone – Benitoite was designated as the official State Gemstone in 1985. It is sometimes called the “blue diamond.”

State Gold Rush Ghost Town – Bodie, in Mono County, was designated the official State Gold Rush Ghost Town by the Legislature in 2002.

State Grass – In 2004, Nassella Pulchra or Purple Needlegrass as it is commonly known, was designated the State Grass. It is the most extensive and widespread native perennial bunchgrass found in the state, with a range extending from the Oregon border into northern Baja California. It is a symbol of the heritage, splendor, and natural diversity found in the early days of California.

State Insect – The California Dog-face Butterfly, found nowhere outside this state, became the State Insect in 1972. Its wings are an iridescent bluish-black, orange and sulfur-yellow in color.

State Marine Fish – In 1995, the Legislature acted to protect the Garibaldi by placing a moratorium on commercial collection until the year 2002: it was also named the official State Marine Fish at that time.

State Marine Mammal – The California Gray Whale was designated the State Marine Mammal in 1975: specimens can grow 30 to 50 feet long and weigh up to 40 tons.

State Mineral – Native Gold is the official State Mineral and was so designated in 1965. This state has produced more gold than any other in the Union, and it can still be panned in California's streambeds.

State Motto – *Eureka* appears on the Great Seal of the State. It is a Greek word meaning, *I have found it*, referring originally to the discovery of gold. “Eureka” was made the official State Motto in 1963.

State Nickname – “The Golden State” has long been a popular designation for California and was made the official State Nickname in 1968. It is particularly appropriate since California's modern development can be traced back to the discovery of gold in 1848 and fields of golden poppies can be seen each spring throughout the state.

State Poet Laureate – The office of Poet Laureate of California is based on a respected and ancient tradition that a state should designate a poet laureate to express in poetry the wit, wisdom and beauty appropriate for honoring individuals, events, special occasions and the natural heritage and culture of the state.

State Prehistoric Artifact – Perhaps the most unusual state symbol is the State Prehistoric Artifact, the chipped stone bear. Discovered at an archaeological dig site in San Diego County in 1985, and resembling a walking bear, this 7,000-8,000 year old object was designated a state symbol in 1991, making California the first state to designate an official State Prehistoric Artifact.

State Reptile – The Desert Tortoise digs a deep burrow that it peaceably shares with owls and rattlesnakes. Related to the giant Galapagos tortoise, it is vegetarian and, if not removed from its desert habitat, very long-lived. The tortoise has been the official State Reptile since 1972 and is protected as an endangered species.

State Rock – In 1965, Serpentine, a blue-or green-colored stone, was adopted by the Legislature as the official State Rock.

State Soil – The San Joaquin Soil was designated as the official State Soil in 1997. The designation commemorates the completion of the state's most comprehensive soil inventory, and acknowledges the importance of soil.

State Song – I Love You, California, lyrics by F.B. Silverwood and music by A.F. Frankenstein of Los Angeles, was first sung publicly by Mary Garden in 1913. In 1951, the State Legislature passed a resolution declaring it California's state song: *I Love You, California* officially became the State Song by law in 1988.

I Love You, California

I.

*I love you, California, you're the greatest state of all.
I love you in the winter, summer, spring and in the fall.*

*I love your fertile valleys; your dear mountains I adore.
I love your grand old ocean and I love her rugged shore.*

Chorus

*Where the snow crowned Golden Sierras
Keep their watch o'er the valleys bloom,
It is there I would be in our land by the sea,
Every breeze bearing rich perfume.
It is here nature gives of her rarest.
It is Home Sweet Home to me,
And I know when I die I shall breathe my last sigh
For my sunny California.*

State Song (cont.)

II.

I love your red-wood forests -- love your fields of yellow grain.

I love your summer breezes and I love your winter rain.

I love you, land of flowers; land of honey, fruit and wine.

I love you, California; you have won this heart of mine.

III.

I love your old gray Missions -- love your vineyards stretching far.

I love you, California, with your Golden Gate ajar.

I love your purple sun-sets, love your skies of azure blue.

I love you, California; I just can't help loving you.

IV.

I love you, Catalina, you are very dear to me.

I love you, Tamalpais, and I love Yosemite.

I love you, Land of Sunshine, Half your beauties are untold.

I loved you in my childhood, and I'll love you when I'm old.

State Tall Ship – The *Californian* was established as the official state tall ship in 2003. Currently housed in the San Diego Maritime Museum, the *Californian* is a full-scale reproduction of the 1848 Revenue Cutter Lawrence. She is 145 feet long with a beam of 27 feet and a draft of 9.5 feet. With all sails flying, she carries 7,000 square feet of sail.

State Tartan – In 2001, California adopted a Scottish symbol of courage in the face of adversity with designation of the official State Tartan. Based on the family tartan of John Muir, the pattern of pacific blue and meadow green with charcoal bands plus red, gold and blue seams may be claimed and worn by any resident of the state.

State Theater – Designed in the Spanish style by architect Elmer Grey, the cornerstone for the Pasadena Playhouse was laid in May 1924. The theater staged its first production in May 1925 and was designated the official State Theater in 1937.

State Tree – The California Redwood became the official State Tree in 1937. Once common throughout the northern hemisphere, redwoods are now found only near the Pacific Coast. There actually are two species of California redwood—the Coast Redwood and the Giant Sequoia—that are among the most ancient and awesome of living things. The Giant Sequoia is the most massive tree in the world, with 30-foot diameter trunks and ages of over 3,000 years. The Coast Redwood is the tallest tree in the world, with specimens exceeding 300 feet in height, and living to be 2,200 years old.